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RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 9934  
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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0196  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000168

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN, EXBS (JEFF HARTSHORN), INL (ANDREW BUHLER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2018

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON EUROPEAN BORDER SECURITY EFFORTS IN  
UZBEKISTAN

REF: 07 TASHKENT 1768

Classified By: Poloff Steven Prohaska for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Summary: In a January 29 meeting with Emboffs, former Chief Technical Advisor for the Border Management in Central Asia Program, Pierre-Paul Antheunissens, provided an update on the program's border security efforts in Uzbekistan. The Border Management in Central Asia Program completed and handed over border posts in Sokh, Mamyk, Vuadil, and Madaniyat last August and September, and is hard at work on another post in Kokand. The program has additional plans including the construction of a border-crossing point for the strategic location of Daut-ata in Karakalpakstan, and is interested in joint work with CENTCOM on social projects in border regions. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff, Export Control and Related Border Security Advisor, and Export Control and Related Border Security Assistant met with former Chief Technical Advisor for the Border Management in Central Asia program, Pierre-Paul Antheunissens, and his successor, Alisher Rasulov, on January 29 to discuss recent work on border security in Uzbekistan. (Note: This program, known as BOMCA, is funded by the European Union but implemented by the United Nations Development Program. End note.) Antheunissens informed Emboffs that he had just left his former position to take over as director for the European Commission's Europa House, which oversees all of the European Commission's technical assistance projects. He anticipated continuing to interact with Emboffs on border security issues in this new capacity.

Border Posts Handed to Uzbekistan, New One in the Works  
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13. (C) Antheunissens indicated that last August the Border Management in Central Asia Program had handed over an advanced border post in Sokh, capable of accommodating 60-75

border guards, and another post in Mamyk (an enclave in Tajkistan) to Uzbekistan. In September, the program also handed over newly-developed containerized rooms at Vuadil and Madamiyat on the border with Kyrgyzstan. The Border Management in Central Asia Program was very busy now, Antheunissens said, and is building an advanced border post at the Tinchlik point-of-entry in Kokand in the Ferghana Valley. The post will use European technology and environmentally-friendly solar panels, and he estimated that it would take five to six months to finish constructing this post.

#### Optimistic About Future Cooperation with Uzbekistan

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14. (C) Relations between the European Commission and Uzbekistan had not been very good last year, Antheunissens continued. A regional action program for this year had been cancelled, and some two million euros had instead been distributed among the other four Central Asia countries. Antheunissens was, nevertheless, hopeful that the Government of Uzbekistan would sign on to a regional action program in the near future which would allow several projects under "BOMCA 7." These projects would include further construction at a training center in Termez and dormitory facilities for students, as well as a border crossing point in southern Karakalpakstan at Daut-ata near Karakalpakiya. Antheunissens said that Daut-ata was a strategic location on a trade corridor between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

15. (C) Rasulov also had several new initiatives planned for Uzbekistan, Antheunissens noted. Rasulov was planning to introduce solar panels to all border crossing points, and

wanted to work with Customs on a dog breeding program at the Dog Training Center. The Border Management in Central Asia Program remained very interested in improving international coordination on border security assistance projects. Antheunissens also expressed interest in pursuing social projects in border areas, such as providing water to the populace. He said that about two years ago, there had been such a joint project between the program and CENTCOM, and wondered if these efforts could be revived. Antheunissens also said that he had an upcoming meeting with a number of Customs officials, and would try to obtain a copy of the recently-revised Uzbek Customs Code.

16. (C) Comment: Despite some difficulties, the Border Management in Central Asia Program appears to have made progress in promoting border security in Uzbekistan, most notably with its completion of the several border posts. Antheunissens' proposal to work jointly with CENTCOM on social projects strikes us as a particularly interesting way to win further support from the populace on border security cooperation. Such social projects could counter the possible perception that further border security infrastructure only means an additional barrier to trade and contact with cross-border friends and family.

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